

# Escrick Parish Council

**Minutes of Escrick Annual Parish meeting to be held in The Wenlock Room at The Parsonage Hotel at 7pm on MONDAY 11<sup>th</sup> May 2026.**

- APM2601: **Welcome:** Chair welcomed Councillors and members of public to the meeting.
- APM2602: **Minutes:** It was resolved to accept the minutes of the Annual Parish meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2025.
- APM2603: **Chairmans report:** Chair gave a report of Parish Council activities since last APM (full report below).
- APM2604: **No comments received from Electors' present about the report.**
- APM2605: **Reports from other organisations presented:**  
a. Village Green Association (see below)  
b. Playing Fields Association (see below)
- APM2606: **No further comments from electors present at the meeting.**

*Signed:*

*Chairman, Escrick Parish Council*

*Date: 10<sup>th</sup> May 2027*

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## **Escrick Parish Council - Chairman's annual report 2025-26**

Parish Councillor numbers had increased this year with the welcome additions of Peter Barber and James Hopwood. However, in March/April we had the very regrettable resignations of two Councillors who were valued members of the Planning Working Group, Stuart and Stewart, both due to the verbal and written narrative put forward concerning the Carrs Meadow planning application. Both Councillors had experienced enough of the unjustified berating on this topic and we need to make sure this does not happen again, more on that later. I thank former Vice Chair Stuart Hawes and former Councillor Stewart Allen for their contribution during their time as volunteers from the community, they made a positive impact on all matters we were involved in debating. For the Councillors that remain, I thank you all for volunteering your time and for your dedication to impartial decision making in the community. I'd also like to thank our Clerk/RFO Sally Look for her continued enthusiasm, professionalism and support during the past year. We continue to enjoy the assistance of Richard Rowson with regard to Defibrillator checks, upkeep of the War Memorials and the Jubilee Fountain as well as management of our web site, this support is much appreciated.

There now follows the Chairman's annual summary, in chronological order, of the non-standard significant topics the PC has been involved in debating during the past twelve months.

## **Street light for the north bound bus shelter / path area area on the A19**

During the year, the recurring issue of lighting at this location was discussed several times and it remains a key concern for residents. Due to the location and the surrounding overhanging trees solar panel shelter lighting / solar free standing path lighting options were discarded and we continue with our discussions on mains powered lighting as the workable solution. Our priority list of solutions for this area were given to City of York Council, North Yorkshire Council and Councillor Cattanach, with solar powered lighting of just the South bound shelter at the bottom of that list. In April 2026 CYC decided without consultation to move forward by just fitting the solar lighting to the South bound shelter. Although this is a nice to have addition, it in no way provides the solution we were requesting. The list of priorities has again been forwarded to all involved parties in April 2026 and we await a response.

Last year we approached NYC Councillor Cattanach about this topic and he offered to seek funding for this work from a combination of CYC and NYC, hence for now we stepped back from looking at spending our own funds which are in reserve. When our requests were last costed with CYC 10 months ago, mains powered street lighting adjacent to the North bound shelter (our main priority) was quoted at £15,849, a mains powered light directly opposite was quoted at £5,464. Pole mounted solar lighting at the South bound bus shelter was estimated at £5-7K.

Now that the South bound shelter has in shelter lighting fitted and benefits from the adjacent mains powered street light that was installed 5 years ago, I would hope lighting on that side of the road at that point is deemed acceptable. We are limited on expenditure due to the removal by NYC of our 'general powers of competence' at the last election, as Councillor numbers had dropped to only 5. The only other route to install a street light in another Parish (the area in question is in the Deighton Parish) would be to use section 137 powers, but the expenditure limit we have using this route is £8,480. We continue to chase our preferred solution of mains lighting for the North bound shelter with all those involved as a key aim for the year ahead.

#### **Dangerous hanging branches above the pedestrian entrance to the primary school**

NYC initially refused permission to the landowner to touch these trees and placed a TPO on them. We resolved to escalate support of this resident application and took our safety appeal to Keir Mather MP. His office was very supportive and following their intervention to NYC and a further site meeting I had with the NYC tree officer involved, the initial decision was reversed by NYC. Any resident or visitor to the school or playing field will find this area is now safe and a much brighter environment, both on the school path and in the school playground.

#### **Efforts to reduce the speed limit on Skipwith Road from before Mill Hill to the village sign**

Our continued requests to NY Highways to improve safety in this area were eventually accepted. Unfortunately before the changes could be put in place, Queen Margarets School closed down and the authority reversed their decision. Once the future use of the former private school site becomes clear we will again seek to improve road safety either side of the junction of Skipwith Road and Wheldrake Lane end.

#### **Proposed solar panel farm off Wheldrake lane**

The discussions about this scheme continue and our latest robust objections have been submitted during the latest consultation period. As always, we respond to planning schemes in a calm professional way, during the permitted consultation period, and always with reference to the facts. It is a matter of regret that during and after the recent village hall meeting on this topic, that we funded, incorrect public statements about the Parish Council position and our planning application involvement were made that are then spread within the community.

#### **Local Plan 'issues and options' public consultation**

We focused on the potential Heronby scheme in the PC response to this latest consultation last year using all the fact based arguments used previously in response to the questionnaire style document. This issue is sure to come back as the Local Plan unfolds in the next few years.

### **Proposed Carrs Meadow development by Escrick Park Estate**

As a PC we supported the significant work done by the Planning Working Group in objecting to this planning application. Our objections at all stages were articulate, accurate, fact based and professional. We used the terms of reference that count with regard to the decisions that are ultimately taken by higher authorities. We worked within the planning guidelines for objection on which any planning decision is made and the final appeal decision has now been taken. It was initially refused by North Yorkshire Council (NYC) and has now also been rejected on appeal by the inspector appointed by the Secretary of State. The main reasons listed for refusal were outlined as follows :-

- The effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area, including whether it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Escrick Conservation Area.
- The effect of the proposed development on highway safety; and
- The effect of the proposed development on flooding and drainage.

It is extremely unfortunate that two of the Planning Working Group decided to stand down from the Parish Council due to the continued negative comments expressed regarding our work, especially when we were supporting the Carrs Meadow residents' opposition to the development. It is worth noting the main reasons for the application being refused are actually the very reasons we stated in the main thrust of our objections to this planning application.

If anyone is to volunteer their time and effort to remain or indeed join the PC in the future, we need to discuss preventing this level of continual derision on topics we have already researched, debated voted and responded to being repeated. For that reason we are debating adopting a 'Vexatious Complaints Policy' at the regular May 2026 PC meeting following this Annual Meeting.

### **Local community Police Officer monthly reports**

This was a useful report we received monthly until towards the end of 2025, we even had attendance from two officers at one of our meetings, something that could have developed when workload permitted . Unfortunately this monthly report structure was cancelled, which when added to the fact that our NYC Councillor again made no appearance at any PC meeting during the year covered by this report, does not help our ability to engage with decision making organisations in the area.

### **Escrick Parish Council Precept for 2026-27**

At our budget meeting in December we agreed to impose no increase in our precept charge to the community for 2026-27, paid as part of the NYC Council Tax bill. Our charge to residents for the coming year was actually -1.5% compared to last year or £69.58 per annum per household. This is down from last years figure of £70.62, the second consecutive year we have reduced our charge to residents.

### **Community Governance Review**

We entered into this process to reduce the number of Councillor seats in the parish from 11 to 9 in an attempt to ensure we can regain our 'General Powers of Competence' status that was taken away by NYC when Councillor

numbers dropped to 5 in 2022. Without GPC status we are inhibited with regard to budget expenditure, as we have previously detailed. The final consultation in this process remains live until 6<sup>th</sup> June. I really do hope Councillors have acted on the requests Sally and myself have made to respond individually and where possible encourage others to do so too. Regaining GPC is critical to avoid another 5 years (after next May) of potential project expenditure frustration. It only takes 2 minutes to answer the four questions posed, so please do ensure you do that before the deadline.

Terry Chambers,

Chairman, Escrick Parish Council

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### **Village Green Association report 2025-26:**

We currently have 7 members on the Association. We were pleased to gain a new member this year, Steve Hornsby. We also have a list of volunteers who assist with maintenance and event set up, currently there are 2 people on the list but we are always looking for others to join.

### **Events**

- Summer Event 2025 – Dinner on the Green

This was not successful and was poorly attended. We are looking at holding a different type of family event in the future. However, we will not be hosting an event this summer, in 2026.

- 10k Run- August 2025

VGA provided the food and hot drinks for this event. Our small team worked very hard, with Michael Luscombe leading and purchasing all the required food etc., The Playing Field association kindly made a generous donation from the profits to the VGA for their help in putting on the event. This money will be used for items of work required on the Green

- Carols around the Christmas Tree

Despite the windy/rainy weather and clash with a Primary School fundraiser – the event was very well attended.

### **Works undertaken during the past year**

- With funds raised from the previous 10k runs, we were able in the August of 2024 to put in a permanent water pipe under Carr Lane which can be connected to a temporary pump we put in the beck. The VGA are now able to pump a water supply to top up the pond when required in dry weather without any traffic disruption on Carr Lane.
- New bench installed donated by the family and Jack and Pat Harrison in their memory.
- Bike Rest Installed near the flagpole for passing cyclist who wish to rest.
- We now have an underground duct system for ensuring safe and easy connection to an electrical supply for events held on the Green.
- Several working party days have been held to undertake maintenance to the pond, bridge, benches and removal of elder and weeds in and around trees and shrubs.

## **Arboriculture works**

- Corkscrew Willow tree had works undertaken by A M Castle Tree Surgeons. We are very pleased with this reduction of the tree, and believe this is now safe but it will be regularly inspected.
  - Removal of dangerous leaning tree taken down by Lewis Tree Surgery. We have plans to replace this tree in the near future.
  - 3 Walnut Trees adjacent to Half Penny Close – Quotes have been received for lifting the crowns on the trees, in discussion with the Parish Council regarding this work. The works cannot be attended to until the late autumn / December as it can damage the trees. Residents on Half Penny Close have been kept informed.
  - Current Christmas Tree. This has grown very large and placing lights for the festive season is becoming difficult. The tree will remain, but we are looking to purchase a smaller, slow growing tree that will reach a manageable height. Location for planting will be near to the flagpole, bench area and probably purchased and planted in the autumn of 2026.
  - Pond. The water level continues to drop. It is possible that an old land drain may be present on the southside of the pond allowing water to percolate away. This will be investigated when possible.
- Blanket weed continues to be a problem during the summer months; we are looking at ways to try and combat this.
- Wildflower strip. This area has become overgrown and we have asked for quotations to clear current area and replant.
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## **Escrick Playing Fields Association – Annual Report 25-26**

This is the third Annual Report with the new Executive Committee of the Escrick Playing Fields Association in place.

### **Membership**

Membership has remained stable, we have had one member step back from the committee but they are still involved with our events.

### **Current members**

- Paul Britton (Chair)
- Simon Hunt (Vice Chair)
- Karen Janssen (Treasurer)
- Jim Dwyer
- Leon Sorrell
- Tim Wheeler

Our annual plan, agreed in September 2025, retained the same key priorities:

1. Meet statutory responsibilities
2. Understanding of, and engagement, with the park
3. Deliver new equipment
4. Develop long term plan including funding model

We are meeting roughly once per half term with a standard agenda, the notes are circulated following the meetings.

### **Events and maintenance**

Our events have become a regular fixture with two years of the Winter Sweep, a successful first year for the Summer Social and we have just completed our third Big Clean at the end of the Easter break. Volunteers mainly comprise committee members and their families but we do have a few others from the village who have come to help.

In addition, we commissioned a local farmer to cut the hedges, both on the road side and along the boundary with the school, for the first time since before the pandemic. This has freed up a remarkable amount of space and is looking much more neat.

As a result of all this activity the park is much better maintained than it had become before the current committee started our work.

All members of the committee contributed to the Escrick 10k last August. We plan to take on organisation of a future in event in 2027. Thank you to all the support from those who have done such a super job with the 10k over the years.

### Funding

The 10k provided very valuable funds.

We still await the outcome of the Public Spaces Fund, this application has now been in for over 18 months.

We were unsuccessful with a bid for funds connected to Northern Powerhouse Rail.

We have not received any other funding during the period.

Finances remain positive with around £20k in the bank.

### Health and safety and compliance

We are on top of our health and safety requirements with the annual inspection complete and weekly visual safety inspections taking place.

A concern was raised in relation to football goals but no further action has been required.

### Communication and relationships

Escrick Parish Council are copied into all communications in relation to the playing fields and we welcome their support.

Our relationship with the school and Yorkshire Learning Trust is strong. They gave us access to the school grounds connected to the hedge cutting in the autumn and they support us with communication for events.

Escrick Park Estate remain a partner in our work and were also very helpful in relation to the hedge cutting.

We have included content in the Parish Magazine most months.

### Aims for 26/27

- Paint all equipment
- Put plans in place for Escrick 10k in 2027
- Secure funds for additional / replacement equipment
- Remove fence and resurface toddler area